

but keep him keyed up to the full tension of unsatisfied desire, his rage at being thwarted will grow more and more unbearable. If this situation continues, then the child's feelings grow so intense that his weak sense of reality is put out of action altogether, and the sense of frustration by cruel, hostile parents assumes the place of reality. Such intolerable tension is thereafter forestalled by the child's becoming a *controlling* parent to himself, damping down, shutting off, restraining, the over-strong instincts which lay him open to the pain of extreme frustration.

Out of this situation of helplessness, thus, there are for the child two main roads; the first, which the normal child will attempt when desire is still not too overwhelming, namely the action of the ego by real adjustment to the outer world, in the first instance by cries to the mother, later on by speech and gesture, and presently by actual movements of the body in the ordered world of space and time along the lines of advancing skill and knowledge, which eventually make the child independent of his mother for gratification. The second, which takes its rise in moments of overwhelming deprivation and frustration when the real persons do not come to the aid of the child, but leave him to deal with his own internal problem, is the building up within the psyche of the parent representative, the super-ego,¹ which then in different ways serves to restrain the primitive wish-self of the child by phantasied punishments.

One of the first, and the most significant, of all ways by which the child attempts to control his primitive impulses of desire and rage is thus through the development of the *super-ego*. The child comes to feel a part of himself acting within his total self as the restraining influence of his actual

parents. He himself, or part of himself, must *be* a parent, in order to control and restrain the primitive surging wishes, and so temper them to make a greater adaptation to external reality actually possible. The child feels, for example, that

¹ In the account which I offer in this and other passages of the earliest formation of the super-ego, it should be remembered that we are here dealing with one of the most difficult problems in psycho-analytic theory, about which there is still a good deal to be discovered. It is the point as to which we can know least by direct observation and have to rely most upon inference and reconstruction. The theory as I actually offer it seems to me convincing and well based; but in any of its details it is to be taken as still to some extent fluid and tentative.